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News and Perspectives

AGRO-ECOLOGY

Science and Education for a Sustainable Agriculture

Volume 11 • Number 2

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PERMAnent AgriCULTURE

by Debra Levey Larson

SUMMER 2002

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The word permaculture is a combination of the words permanent and agriculture. It has been broadly defined as a system of applied design for the creation of a sustainable human habitat. Sounds a lot like sustainable agriculture, doesn't it? But, is permaculture just another word for sustainable agriculture? Is it organic farming with a cultural world view? Or is it something else?

"Permaculture is one approach to sustainable agriculture," said Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, research specialist from the University of Illinois in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences." It aims to create a system that is economically viable, ecologically-sound and socially responsible, but it's underlying ethic is one of harmony with nature, abandoning the idea that humans have superiority over the natural world."

Cavanaugh-Grant scheduled an afternoon at a permaculture community in Anna, Illinois as the first in a series of 2002 sustainable ag tours sponsored by the Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program at the University of Illinois, the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR SARE) Professional Development Program and the Illinois Small Farm Task Force.

"The tour gave educators and others interested in sustainable agriculture alternatives, an opportunity to see first-hand how permaculture works," said Cavanaugh-Grant.

The Tour Begins

On a beautiful day in May, a few dozen people gathered to tour Dayempur Farm in Anna, Illinois. Many in the group were University of Illinois Extension educators who wanted to learn more about permaculture. There were also two journalists, a college student and a father and son who are both passionate about preserving the earth.

continued on next page

Agro-Ecology News and Perspectives is published by the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). This newsletter is designed to inform its readers about the well being of human and natural communities through the adoption of agricultural practices and farming systems that are economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just. This issue was edited by Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant and Debra Levey Larson, designed by Scherer Communications and produced by Roberts Design Company.

Please address all correspondence to: *Agro-Ecology* Editors, 211 Mumford Hall, 1301 West Gregory Drive, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

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Wayne Weiseman, co-manager of Dayempur Farm and tour leader, began by giving a brief history of how the farm came to be in existence and an introduction to the philosophy of permaculture as interpreted in Bill Mollison's book entitled, Permaculture: A Designer's Manual.

Dayempur – In the Eastern languages of Arabic and Urdu, the name means "ancient place." The 60 acres of land that make up Dayempur were purchased from a folk artist named Geneva Bosler in the early 1990s. Bosler's family had always owned the property, and it had never received any chemical applications. She was delighted to find buyers who shared these values. Currently there are approximately two acres in cultivation.

Weiseman describes the farm as a land-based, self-reliant community project that combines organic crop/food production, alternative shelter and energy, appropriate technologies and educational programs. The community exists through donations from members of the community who share in the products of the farm and from other benefactors.

The Permaculture Philosophy

Permaculture is not just about eliminating the use of chemical additives. It's more of a philosophy of relating to nature — watching and learning from what you see around you and then making decisions in harmony with nature. Weiseman believes that a garden should require a minimal amount of care and is currently investigating perennial vegetable crops grown in a system that allows the garden to "mimic what the natural world does without effort."

Observation is done continually. "Everything on the land is connected," said Weiseman. "So, something you do in one place will affect the land in another place — it's all part of an ecological web. We constantly take a step back to look at the farm."

One example of observation that Weiseman sited was an orchard-in-progress. Weiseman pointed out a spot on the slope of a hill where a fruit orchard was being established. He said, "The peach orchards around here in Southern Illinois spray for pests. I'm not going to spray. If insects attack the trees, I want to know what they are and how they work. Then I'll be able to figure out what to do."



Young fruit orchard at Dayempur Farm.

The layout of the farm is also an important, philosophic component drawn from Mollison's book. Mollison established a system of zones to define farming activity. Zone planning means locating elements according to how much we use them or how often we need to service them. The zones radiate out from the farmhouse in concentric circles.

- Zone Zero is where most of the activity takes place — usually close to the farmhouse with smaller gardens and animals that the farmer uses every day like chickens.
- Zone One would include larger animals like cows and horses.
- Zones Two and three might be the crops, orchards, larger food, medicinal and utility gardens and animals.
- Zone Four are places like the forest where the farmer would go least often.





Dayempur Farm is using this zone model as it extends the cultivation and development on the property. A small chicken coop is located near the farmhouse. Adjacent to that is an outdoor area where canning takes place.



(above right) According to the permaculture philosophy of zones, small farm animals like chickens would be located in zone one. (above left) A small chicken coop is located near the farmhouse at Dayempur Farm. (far left) Wayne Weiseman describes the layers of plantings at the entrance to the forest garden.

The Forest Garden

What appears to be Weiseman's pride and joy is a small plot situated close to the farmhouse that he calls "a model of a forest garden." It started as a 2000 square foot area which Weiseman has expanded to about 2500 square feet. The model calls for planting vertically as well as horizontally with herbs at the lowest level, shrubs next and trees occupying the topmost layer.

At mid-May, the forest garden was overflowing with variety and color. There are approximately 90 species of herbs and 20 species of fruit represented in the small area of ground. Weiseman noted that flowers used here in the United States as ornamentals, are used as medicines in other cultures. So, in his forest garden, every plant has a purpose and is useful for something.

There are only about 5% annuals in the garden, the rest being care-free perennials. In fact, Weiseman said that he has only worked in the garden this year a few hours and hardly ever pulls weeds. "The diversity of the plants takes care of the weeds and pests. If you plant one or two crops, weeds can come in, but if you plant lots of different kinds of plants, the weeds and grass can't come in."

Nearby, a large, organic garden boasts 30 to 40 different vegetables on the single acre of land. The plot is surrounded by eight-foot high fencing to discourage deer. There are also locust trees planted around the perimeter of the fence to add nitrogen to the soil. Rye and vetch that served as cover crops over the winter are still evident in areas that haven't been sown yet in this growing season. Although small, Weiseman said that the

The Parents of Permaculture

The term, "permaculture" was coined in 1978 by Bill Mollison, an Australian ecologist, and David Holmgren. It is a combination of the words "permanent and agriculture." Together, Mollison and Holmgren wrote a book entitled, Permaculture One.

Holmgren said that in the mid-70s, he and Mollison originally defined permaculture as "an integrated, evolving system of perennial or self-perpetuating plant and animal species useful to man," but that a definition of permaculture, that more accurately reflects the ideas in their book, is:

> *Consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature while yielding an abundance of food, fibre and energy for provision of local needs.*

He said "The people, their buildings and the way they organize themselves are central to permaculture. Thus, the permaculture vision of permanent (sustainable) agriculture has evolved to one of permanent (sustainable) culture."

Later, in 1988, Mollison wrote a 600 page textbook on permaculture entitled, Permaculture: A Designer's Manual.

Mollison's goal was to create systems that are ecologically sound and economically viable, that do not exploit or pollute and are sustainable in the long run. In the introduction to his book, Mollison paints a bleak picture of the future if behaviors and attitudes don't change. He writes, "The sad reality is that we are in danger of perishing from our stupidity and lack of personal responsibility to life." He describes his book as being a design manual for how to do permaculture, but also includes his own value system, ethics and passion for the earth.



Inside the energy barn, Weiseman explains more about the farm's invertors.

garden produced enough sweet potatoes to feed the community of 60 people over the winter.

Using Energy Efficiently

Using natural energy is also an important consideration on Dayempur. One of Mollison's suggestions is to tap natural energy whenever possible. For example, he suggests growing fruit bushes up against a white wall because the light reflects off of the white, giving the plants more light.



On the roof of the energy barn sits – 100 watt solar panels and a 400 watt wind generator

But, at Dayempur, they also make use of available technology. The farm uses solar and wind energy. On the roof of the "energy barn" sit 12-100 watt solar panels and a 400 watt wind generator. The combination provides 70% of the necessary power in the winter and 40-50% in the summer. Inside of the barn is a back-up generator, batteries and two wall-mounted invertors. (The invertors take the DC signal from the solar and wind units and

transform it to AC power.) The units were purchased locally for about $26,000 and the generator cost about $8,900, but Weiseman stressed that there is a 50% rebate from this type of energy-saving equipment. He also pointed out that at the time of the tour, the meters were running backwards, adding power back into the grid.

Summarizing the Realities

How can a farmer with 1000 acres of corn or soybean even begin to think about some of the issues that permaculture raises? Weiseman said that they can begin by creating a small system that creates high yields, then continue to grow. He recommended that a farmer start with one half or even one quarter of an acre. And, to make it even easier, Weiseman summarized by saying, "anything that creates a healthy environment can be permaculture."

Community director, Din Dayemi, said that they are about seven years into their 20 year plan and that those plans are continually changing based on new discoveries and trials. "It's a system that thinks holistically," he said. "Over the years, we've discovered that some things we wanted to do are just too expensive and some are just a hippie-pipedream, so we just say, let's get real."

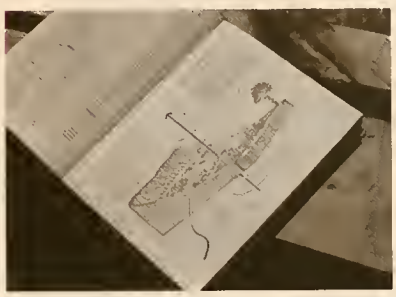
Resources on Permaculture

http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/perma.html
http://www.nor.com.au/environment/perma/

Introduction to Permaculture. 1991. Mollison B, Slay R.M. Tagari Publications, Tyalgum, Australia. 216 p.

Permaculture: A Designer's Manual. 1988. Bill Mollison. Tagari Publications, Tyalgum, Australia. 576 p.

Permaculture One. 1978. Mollison B, Holmgren D. Corgi. Published in five languages, it is now out of print.



A copy of Bill Mollison's textbook entitled Permaculture: A Designer's Manual, open to a diagram.

Workshops are held several times a year at Dayempur Farm in Anna, Illinois with instruction in the basic concepts of permaculture, eco-agriculture, organic farming and gardening practices and uses of appropriate technology. The workshops include classroom lectures, observation exercises and hands-on projects. For information about the workshops and registration:

Wayne Weiseman
Dayempur Farm
35 Nubbin Ridge Land, Anna, IL 62906
Phone: (618) 893-4822
Fax: (618) 457-8331
E-mail: pcproject@aol.com

The Land Connection

by Stuart Tarr

On July 1st, 2001, some Woodford County residents involved in sustainable agriculture noticed that a lovely, 21+ acre piece of rolling green pastureland near Goodfield had gone on the market. The area, midway between Peoria and Bloomington-Normal, sits along the Mackinaw River watershed. Given its location and that it is one of Illinois' most beautiful areas — rolling glacial moraines interspersed with woodlands, pastures, and fertile flat farmland — it is under intense suburban sprawl development pressure. Priced at $5000/acre, only developers, not most farmers, can afford to buy the land.



Half-finished moveable coop will rotate through the Land Connection pastureland, providing hens with fresh greens and insects.

Sensing an urgency to preserve the land as agricultural rather than watch it become yet another subdivision, some residents formed a non-profit organization. Within two weeks they made an offer and bought the pasture.

The Land Connection Foundation was born.

Congerville resident Terra Brockman, who along with her brother Henry, a local organic farmer, was a driving force behind the purchase and is now president of the Land Connection explains just what the new organization plans to do, "The first thing is to buy the land and protect it from sprawl development, then convert it to organic agriculture, and train new farmers through organic agriculture projects that will also provide organic food to local customers."

The Land Connection closed the deal on the pasture on February 28, 2002 and already have two operating projects on the land. The bulk of the money to buy the pasture came from generous donations, particularly from people in the Chicago area concerned about the loss of farmland, but the foundation has also been raising support through benefit dinners.

Besides raising funds, the Land Connection folks have also been busy supplying electricity to the barn on the property and fixing it up, having a spring work day to root out Canadian Thistles, and are organizing farm tours, demonstrations, and discussions for the summer. Terra Brockman notes that there is intense interest among people in the Chicago area to come down and tour the area, so she is also working on setting up a fall tour, with time to talk with the farmers, taste their wares, and socialize around a campfire in the evening.



Finished coop installed on The Land Connection land, full of pullets just beginning to lay.

The Land Connection is also in the process of educating farmers and consumers about Community Supported Agriculture where persons contract with a farmer, who in exchange for up-front capital, provides weekly grocery baskets to the subscribers. Brockman sees the Land Connection as helping provide the community with an "ever-greater, ever-more-diverse cornucopia of excellent food; food grown and raised in a way that is good for every living thing."

The Kaeb Family's Connection

There are many people, often farmers' children, who would like to continue to farm and farm in a more sustainable, environmentally friendly manner, but don't have sufficient capital to buy land, or can't afford to take the risk of switching over from chemical-intensive farming. The goal of the Land Connection is to make it possible for more farmers to farm organically by providing them with access to land, expertise, financial support, and market connections to sell their products locally.

For example, Leon and LeAnn Kaeb both grew up on farms and would like to farm, but the current economic barriers make it all but impossible. Through the Land Connection, the Kaebs and their five children are now raising 80 laying hens on the recently purchased pasture and are marketing the eggs directly to local families through a subscription service. The Kaebs, who live in Congerville, always wanted to learn organic farming, and the Land Connection has provided not only the land, but also education, training, and hands-on learning experiences through consultants/mentors to help with chicken raising and egg production, business planning, and moveable chicken coop construction.

Terra Brockman notes that this is only part of the learning experience. The organic laying hen project will also be— like all Land Connection projects — a destination for educational tours and talks, for adults and school children alike. The Kaeb's experience raising organic hens and selling their eggs to the local community will become a source of information to share broadly with the public. All farmers doing projects on Land Connection land are required to keep careful records on their project that will become over a period of years valuable sources of information for persons interested in particular agriculture projects.

Land Connection Foundation Goals

- Educate the public about organic food and its benefits to human and environmental health.
- Increase the availability and quality of local, organically grown fruits, vegetables, eggs, and meat.
- Reduce the number of food-producing acres lost forever to development.
- Increase the number and economic viability of small family farms.
- Lower the average distance that food travels from farm to kitchen table.
- Bring new, young farmers to the land.
- All projects will be done without chemical inputs and without government subsidies.

continued on next page

Future Land Connection projects may include:

- Organically grown corn, soybean, oats, wheat, rye, and hay
- Alternative crops — sunflower, safflower, buckwheat, etc.
- Chickens for egg and/or meat production
- Other poultry such as turkeys, geese, ducks
- Dairy cattle and goats for milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or ice cream production
- Meat animals such as cattle, swine, meat goats, sheep
- Beekeeping
- Vegetable production—fresh market, frozen food operation
- Cut flower production—fresh market, dried arrangements, wreaths, etc
- Medicinal and/or culinary herb production-fresh market, dried, herb oils, herb vinegars, soaps, gift and decorative items
- Fruit orchard such as apple, pear, peach, apricot, etc.—fresh market, applesauce, jellies, dried fruits, fruit leather
- Grape vineyard-table grapes, juice, wine, raisins
- Small fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, blackberries, hardy kiwis-fresh market, dried, frozen
- Bakery using grains, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, eggs from Land Connection and/or other local farms

An Organic Orchard Takes Shape

Another project, already in operation, is an organic orchard project organized by David Williams, a professor at Illinois State University. A planting day and grafting seminar, open to the public, was held in early April 2002. Nine apple trees of various type were planted on a corner of the field as a demonstration plot, that shows different trellising and staking systems, and alternative ways of controlling harmful insects and viruses. At a mid-April follow-up seminar Williams and community members pruned and staked the trees and built a vertical axis trellising system. This French-style system, which is somewhat similar to how grapes are trellised, encourages high productivity, high fruit quality, and ease of management. Williams will continue to conduct public seminars as the fruit trees develop.

Growing a Reputation for Organics

Although it has been in existence for less than a year and fully acquired the property only a few months ago, the Land Connection has hit the ground running. Support for the project is high both in Woodford County and across the state.

Terra Brockman's vision, and that of her colleagues at the Land Connection is "An Organic Mecca." She writes, "There is no reason that Central Illinois can not become an organic mecca — a place similar to Sonoma County, California where you get not only the finest organic tomatoes and corn, but the finest organic herbs, grapes, strawberries, raspberries, apples, eggs, milk, cream, ice cream, goat milk cheese and yogurt, wood-fire brick-oven bread, and humanely-raised, organically-fed chicken, lamb, pork, beef, duck, and turkey."

And, as she notes, "This is not some pie-in-the-sky pipe dream. It is already happening."

Portions of this article were taken from The Land Connection's Web site: http://www.thelandconnection.org

An Ode to Organic Agriculture

Attendance at the permaculture tour in Anna, IL and viewing a movie of a Shakespearean play, inspired John Edward Marlin to write the following essay on organic agriculture with a creative twist.



John E. Marlin examines one of the more than 90 species of herbs while touring the Dayempur Farm in Anna, IL.

Much ado about Suppin'

by John Edward Marlin

Hearken fair Rowena! Make fast thy lips! For an apothecary's taint lies upon yon fruit. Feel you not its poison? T'is a cunning victual of taste and make unnatural. Repair you to the fountain and cleanse thy pearly hands of its corruption.

Oh weep not for thy life, dear lady. These are poisons meant for another. A dose to fell ten insects could nary defeat a single maiden. Yet the temerity to consume such trace venom is born more of ignorance than strength of spirit, for even the smallest of bites your body does store. A thousand trace amounts building to ill health.

Better to sup upon the delights of an organic nature. Those wondrous provisions coaxed from the earth with naught but the sun and wind to guide them. No poison hath ever graced their divine countenance. No foul tincture hath warped their taste nor measure. Oh, but words so rarely do justice. A simple taste will ensure both smiles and health everlasting.

AYE! Whilst thou save none for me?!! No matter, thou hast meandered the wastes of processed foods far too long to hold thyself. The mountainous flavor of the organic hath left thou little choice in thine actions. As the parched man to water, the SUV to fossil fuels, no creature of earthen make could hold thee from such repast.

John Edward Marlin is a senior at Urbana High School in Urbana, IL. Marlin is an Eagle Scout, volunteers in prairie restoration efforts, has participated in an annual backyard wild flower sale with his family for over 10 years and publishes his own newsletter on environmental and political issues.

Third National Small Farm Conference

September 17-20, 2002 in Albuquerque, New Mexico

The conference will provide a forum to discuss areas of concern involved in keeping American small farms economically viable, form new partnerships and formulate an action agenda necessary to maximize existing resources and coordinate activities to help America's small farms, ranches, and rural communities. It will also be an opportunity to share small farm success stories from around the country, including direct marketing strategies, new specialty crop and livestock niches, risk management techniques, and ways individuals and communities are coping with the emotional dimensions of the Farm Crisis.

On-farm tours of small farms and ranches near Albuquerque will be conducted.

The registration fee is $125 for advanced registration (by Friday, August 16). The conference fee will cover costs for registrationpackets, proceedings, three breakfasts, two lunches, two dinner buffets, and conference tours. For more information visit: http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/smallfarm/

Changing Faces of Conservation and Agriculture
The Future of Working Lands
October 8-10, 2002 in Moline, Illinois

The conference is sponsored by Soil and Water Conservation Society chapters in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Speakers will review current conservation and agriculture conditions and policies, and look at projected changes in both conservation and agriculture particularly in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. Policy, research and practice alternatives that will bring about a promising future will be discussed. Conservation provisions in the new farm bill, conservation research, conservation delivery systems, fewer and larger farm operations, specialty and niche farming, economic trends in agriculture and other issues will be highlighted.

Conference registration information and agenda is available at:
http://www.iaswcs.org/west_north_central.htm

ISAC Mourns Loss of Valued Member

Larry Kennel, a long time Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Committee member died on June 18, 2002.

"The story of how Larry came into sustainable agriculture is interesting," said Dan Anderson, chairman of ISAC. "Several years ago a long-time landlord of his died.
The landlord's daughter inherited the land and promptly told Larry that she wanted it farmed chemical-free. This was a shocking turn of events for Larry and he almost gave up the land, thinking it couldn't be done. Then he and his son starting thinking about it and they came up with a four-crop rotation planted in alternating strips. It was a unique system that ended up working great, and totally chemical-free."

Anderson said that although Kennel was a soft-spoken man, he was also an innovator. "He didn't like to toot his own horn, but he was a good farmer, and we were fortunate to have the benefit of his wisdom for the years he served on the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Committee. He'll be deeply missed."

CALENDAR

AUGUST, 2002

***6 Illinois Vegetable, Pumpkins & Low-Nicotine Tobacco**
Keenes, IL and Mt Vernon, IL
9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
On this all-day tour you'll visit Frey Fruit and Vegetables Production, Mark Donoho Pumpkin Farm, learn about growing low-nicotine tobacco in Illinois and end at Gekota Winery.

23-24 Special Forest Products Production & Marketing Conference
Sinsinawa, Wisconsin
Conference will target forest landowners and agency personnel. Information will be presented on marketing both traditional forest products and a wide array of additional products and services.
http://ilvirtualforest.nres.uiuc.edu/Conferences/SFP_Marketing_Conference.html

SEPTEMBER, 2002

5 Orr Beef Research Center Field Day
Beef Center in Pike County in Perry, IL
A tour of the current research trials will begin at 2:30 p.m., followed by an evening educational program and a free steak dinner. The program is being co-sponsored by the University of Illinois Department of Animal Sciences and Extension.

Contact: Jim Dahlquist, Manager of the Orr Research Center Beef Unit at (217) 236-4961
Email: dahlqust@uiuc.edu.

***10 Fee Hunting**
Spring View Acres, Pike County, IL
9:30 a.m. to Noon
Mike Rahe will present information on fee hunting enterprises such as whitetail deer and turkey and "put and take" pheasant and quail hunting including wildlife management, economics, liability, and marketing.

17-20 The Third National Small Farm Conference
Albuquerque, New Mexico
See conference description on page 10 and for more information visit: http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/smallfarm/

21 Illinois River Sweep 2002 - Chicago to Grafton
Friends of the Illinois River provide free t-shirts, work gloves, and trash bags for the clean-up event if ordered by August 15, 2002 by contacting this toll-free number, phone (866) 584-1310. For more information, contact Bob Frazee, University of Illinois Natural Resources Educator at (309) 694-7501.

OCTOBER, 2002

8-10 Changing Faces of Conservation and Agriculture The Future of Working Lands
Moline, IL (see page 10)

*** 11 Agritourism in Action**
Apple Basket Farms, Barry, IL
9:00 a.m. to Noon
Learn about how this apple orchard grew into a thriving agritourism family business with a petting zoo, giant corn maze, educational tours and more.

25-26 Special Forest Products Production & Marketing Conference
Cape Girardeau, Missouri
Conference will target forest landowners and agency personnel. Information will be presented on marketing both traditional forest products and a wide array of additional products and services. http://ilvirtualforest.nres.uiuc.edu/Conferences/SFP_Marketing_Conference.html

NOVEMBER, 2002

*** #13 A Time to Act: Providing Educators with Resources to Address Small Farm Issues**
Effingham, IL

*** #14 A Time to Act: Providing Educators with Resources to Address Small Farm Issues**
Peoria, IL

17-20 Symposium: International Farming Systems Assoc.
Orlando, Florida
Symposium topics will focus on small farm diversification and competitiveness; engaging diverse stakeholders in support of small farms; farming systems knowledge and information; farming systems education and training; food security and safety.
For more information contact: Beth Miller-Tipton at (352)392-5930; E-mail: bmiller-tipton@mail.ifas.ufl.edu or visit the conference Web site: http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ifsa

* For more information, including registration, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217)968-5512 or E-mail: cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu or visit: www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/

See the back cover of this newsletter for more information about these identical workshops.

WORKSHOP

A Time to Act: Providing Educators with Resources to Address Small Farm Issues

November 13
at the Keller Inn and Convention Center in Effingham
and
November 14
at the Holiday Inn City Centre in Peoria

Who should attend:
University of Illinois Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) and other agricultural professionals with the necessary resources to begin to provide educational, technical and production assistance to small farms.

Topics:

(1) Financing and Credit
(2) Market Access
(3) Farmer Cooperatives
(4) Regulatory and Government Barriers
(5) Available Grants and Resources.

More detailed information regarding the agenda and registration is available at http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap

For more information, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at 217/968-5512; cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu.

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Science and Education for a Sustainable Agriculture

Volume 11 • Number 3

University of Illinois Establishes Organic Task Force

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By John Masiunas and Martha Bazik

FALL 2002

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During the past decades, the University of Illinois has been conducting limited research and education on organic agriculture. These efforts have generally been initiated by individual researchers or Extension personnel as part of larger programs and have lacked coordination. In the fall of 2001, 20 faculty and staff came together from the College of ACES, the Illinois Natural History Survey, the Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture Program and University of Illinois Extension's Crops, Horticulture, Integrated Pest Management, and Ag Entrepreneur Development Teams to discuss the role of the University in organic education and research.

As a result of this meeting, an Organic Task Force was established. The task force consisted of both campus-based faculty and Extension field staff. Its objectives were to assess the needs of stakeholders; identify current activities and interest among University of Illinois faculty and staff; communicate the results of the assessments; and develop an ongoing communication process to ensure stakeholders provide input and learn about outcomes.

Stakeholder input on their needs is continuing but key informant interviews have been conducted and two listening sessions held in

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Task Force, continued

DeKalb and Lincoln. Evident from both interviews and listening sessions, was the consensus that University of Illinois has a vital role to play in organic research and education. A separate article reports the results of the listening sessions.

The task force also administered an internal survey to gauge the interest of faculty and Extension staff in organic research and education. The internal survey revealed that significant interest, and expertise exists within the university system to mount a creditable organic program. Of the 76 faculty and Extension staff who responded, 37 indicated that they have engaged in educational outreach or research and 62 of the respondents indicated that they have interest in participating in future organic and research efforts of University of Illinois. The task force is currently developing recommendations for College administrators on methods to facilitate and coordinate organic activities at the University of Illinois.

Listening Sessions Conducted With Organic Growers

Listening sessions were conducted as part of the ongoing process of University of Illinois Extension and the University of Illinois Organic Task Force to obtain farmer input on research and outreach programming needs. Two listening sessions, one in Lincoln and the other in Dekalb, were conducted this summer. Those in attendance expressed strong feelings and considerable skepticism about University of Illinois' willingness to address the educational and research needs of the organic producers based upon its past performance.

Attendees identified a need for education and research in the areas such as increasing consumption of locally-grown food, reducing pesticide drift problems, interpretation of local and national regulations, and information on transitioning to organic agriculture and the future of organic farming as more corporations try to buy into this niche market.



Larry Wettstein discussing his organic soybeans during an organic field day conducted by The Land Connection.

Listening session participants also identified a need for consumer-friendly, easy-to-access directories, including organic farmers, supplies, consultants, and markets along with information on machinery and implements necessary for organic farmers. There were a number of issues (i.e. pesticide drift, GMO pollen) related to the "interface" between conventional and organic producers that needed further research and education. Information on alternative crops (i.e. amaranth, mulberries) was needed so farmers could move away from the corn/soybean only model and discontent from farm subsidies.

Farmers at the listening sessions felt that the University of Illinois should be coordinating field days and on-farm research related to organic agriculture. It should encourage farmer participation in research and recognize the research already being conducted by organic farmers. There were a number of concerns about the funding sources and focus of current University of Illinois research. Also, the participants felt too little U of I research farm acreage was dedicated to organic farming.

Overall, participants in the listening sessions were willing to give the University of Illinois a chance to play a role in organic research and education, but want to see some results soon.

Examples of outcomes the Organic Task Force is starting to foster include organic field days, on-line databases, participatory research with organic farmers, a directory of local organic farmers, farmers' markets and specialty stores, and allocation of land on the South Farms to organic research.

For further information or to provide input, contact the Task Force Co-chairs Martha Bazik bazik@uiuc.edu or (309) 796-0512) or John Masiunas masiunas@uiuc.edu or (217) 244-4469.

Rotational grazed cattle on the Larry Wettstein farm near Cangerville.



TRANSITIONING TO ORGANIC

— *The business of renegades*

By Stuart Tarr

When asked what one should focus on in an article on the transition from conventional to organic/sustainable agricultural production, organic activist and farmer Juli Brussell was blunt. "Don't sugar coat it. We've had plenty of that." She said that it takes a certain type of person to see the whole process through. "The kind of entrepreneurial person who can think big and get things underway might not have what it takes to manage an operation for the long haul. The tasks take different skill sets, and you have to take that into account."

Farmers wanting to transition often face several large interrelated barriers. To get back to a more sustainable, organic production regime, farmers have to face the reality of declining yields during the transition process as synthetic chemical inputs are eliminated and the soil is built up naturally. For those wanting to raise organic crops, the land must be free of synthetic chemicals for three years before it can be certified as organic.

Paul Gebhart, a diversified organic farmer in Christian County, talks about how difficult it can be. Gebhart strongly suspects the chemicals his father used when he transitioned to high input agriculture after WWII were responsible for the rare cancer that killed him. That experience led Paul to question the wisdom of that sort of agriculture and was a strong motivation to him as he moved to organic production. Even while his father was alive, they were looking to reduce inputs. Independent soil tests showed that the soil had far too much of some nutrients and was deficient in others. They started reallocating and cutting back inputs, although Gebhart noted, no savings were realized. Then during the farm crises of the 80s he began cutting back even more. Yields were reduced and financially he was at about the same point. "It was a disaster for a while," he said.

But then the soil began improving and the yield came back up. Finally, all he had to do was cut one more input and he was at organic production, realizing that it was how his grandfather and everyone before him had farmed. Now, his grain production is good and it helps support his livestock operations. He cautions others that there is a time lag, but the knowledge of his and others' experience on how to become successful is encouraging "for the guy just starting off."



Armin Hesterberg and his Belgian Blue Bull.

Once organic or sustainable production is underway, producers face a chicken/egg problem. They need reliable markets, but markets need a secure steady supply of product to emerge and survive. Brussell and Burt Swanson, an agricultural economist at the University of Illinois, point out that the viability of transition depends heavily upon having accessible and reliable markets developed, but that for these markets to come into existence and be reliable over the longer term, they have to have reliable suppliers. Brussell said, "Both the market and the supply have to be developed in tandem." Organic and natural product producers are not selling undifferentiated commodities, and can't afford being a simple price-taker on commodity markets. They need to have markets available, find them, and develop them. And that means that besides being a producer, one has to also be a marketer.

Armin Hesterberg, a farmer from Gifford in Champaign County who raises and markets a premium natural beef, simply said, "It's a heck of a lot of work. The producer has to know that marketing is more work than you can imagine. If you have a niche product, you have to keep in mind that you might not get rid of it all. You might have to sell one third to one half of it on regular markets until your clientele is built up."

Hesterberg mentioned some producers who failed trying to do what he is successfully doing. "They said their product was great and they thought everyone would believe it. They thought they had the golden egg, but it takes a while to educate consumers and find the market." Despite the generally upward swing of his business, Hesterberg noted that it's a long haul. "Marketing raises a whole new bunch of problems outside of farming—packaging concerns, what to do with the lesser cuts." Both of these have been a problem for Hesterberg, and finding solutions requires even more work. Even so, the market is "much better than before" and keeps getting better.

"Last year we butchered 40 to 50 head. This year we should double that. Today there is much more knowledge than there was five to ten years ago. Having Champaign-Urbana nearby helps us a lot. It has good income and education levels and a strong economy. More people there are knowledgeable and interested in healthy foods." Looking forward, he said, "There are lots of niche markets that are totally untapped. It's a bottomless pit of opportunity. New things are on the horizon and we are just limited by our imagination. It takes thinking outside the box."



Henry Brockman (center) with interns in his hoop house.

Henry Brockman, an organic vegetable farmer in Woodford County, when asked about how his operation functions said without embellishment, "We work really hard." Intensively managing a small organic plot without chemicals or significant costly equipment requires a great deal of labor, and Brockman depends not only on his own hard work, but family labor, a hired hand, and usually one or two interns who want to learn organic farming before starting their own operations.

Brockman grows some 400 varieties of vegetables during the year, which takes a fair amount of knowledge. Why so many varieties? One reason, Brockman says, is to allow people to experience many more and different foods. He grows a number of Asian vegetables, an interest cultivated while he lived in Japan, where he met his wife, Hiroko. She provides "East meets Midwest" recipes for the vegetables. Another reason is to stagger harvests over the growing season so he has a steady supply for customers. A third is as insurance for when one or more variety fails.

Brockman has raised organic vegetables for 10 years and has developed a steady clientele in two locations: the Evanston farmers' market, and 100 families in the Bloomington-Normal CSA (community supported or subscription agriculture, whereby customers contract with a farmer to provide them with food over a season). For the past few years he has also been providing organic eggs from his 200 layers. Developing those markets has not been easy. Brockman grew up on a farm in the area, but after several years abroad, returned with the desire to become an organic farmer. To learn the craft, he spent a year internship on a rural New York farm before beginning to farm in Illinois. Marketing at the Evanston farmers' market means rising at 1:00 a.m. to drive to Evanston and to get set up to sell by the market's 6:00 a.m. opening. "The first year I needed to get into the market and get money. Evanston is one of the best ones in Chicago, and luckily they had a spot." Evanston is still the only farmers' market where he sells, partly because he has developed loyal customers and he reciprocates that loyalty, and partly because the income from there is good. He

"Many say they are interested but they don't do it. It's a risk and I understand that. Transition takes time, and it's a tough switch."

could make as much money servicing more markets closer to home, but it would take more time and he says "I'd rather be out farming" than selling.

He got involved with the local CSA by piggybacking with a local egg business. The egg business folded, but Brockman contacted all the previous subscribers and eventually built up a solid CSA base. Even so, it's a steadily changing base with a high yearly turnover. Brockman says if 60 to 70 percent come back for the next year it's a good return rate. "It's a different way of living. My customers have to learn how to cook more vegetables than they have in the past. Every week they get something they've never cooked before and may have never even heard of," he said with a laugh. Instructions and recipes are often included in the basket.

Brockman is an organic farming success story, but he noted that many who would like to get off the high-input, corn/bean treadmill are not up to the risk and

challenge. "If someone in the neighborhood is doing it, it helps, but the fear of losing the farm is strong. Many say they are interested but they don't do it. It's a risk and I understand that. Transition takes time, and it's a tough switch. It's very hard to change even if you believe the old way is not the right way."

Woodford County now has several organic farmers and is tied to emerging organic markets, so Brockman and others in the area see a promising future for more organic farming in the region. This year, people in the region can sign up not only with Henry Brockman's vegetable CSA but also affiliated CSAs for organic beef, organic eggs, and organic fruit.

This kind of massing of production might help what an economist like Swanson sees as major obstacles to those wanting to develop sustainable agriculture: the length and complexity of the supply chain from soil to table and the lack of transparency in commodity markets. By radically shortening the chain and developing home markets for growing niche products, and by increasing the number of suppliers to help improve reliability, organic agriculture has significant growth potential.



Dennis and JoAnn Dickman, who raise natural, grass-pastured chickens and eggs on their farm near Herscher in Kankakee County, found the market coming to them. But, even so, when they decided to go into it in a substantial way, they found they had to invest a significant amount of money in processing equipment to meet state regulations, which were, according to JoAnn, a real pain. "For a while it was just too big a hassle. When we started in 1999 they had no state guidelines for a processing room." Getting the bureaucratic run-around, and finding regulations to be vague at best, nearly ended their endeavor, but they finally got a state agriculture inspector who was helpful, and got them licensed and operating. Still, it's work beyond just the raising and selling, "We have to keep records of everyone we sell to and can only process 5000, and they have to be frozen or refrigerated when they leave here."

Paul Gebhart summed up some of the issues involved in transition for the future. "You need four things to farm: Land, labor, capital, and management. Capital and land are way up and labor is way down." (As an aside he noted that it really doesn't take much work to run a conventional farm anymore. The use of chemical pest and weed control is as much for the convenience of them as it is their effectiveness). "So management is the area we need to focus on. If it was managed differently, then we can bring labor back on the farm."

Gebhart sadly registered the decline in rural life and institutions as farms have become larger and fewer, reducing rural population. In his area, one community had three churches just a few years ago, but two had to merge, and the other disappeared. The loss of churches, schools, and even towns clearly troubles him. "Bringing young people back into farming is key. Young people have the labor and don't face a lot of risk, so bring them in and do sweat equity work and get a farming education. We can transition with young people. You've got to get them enough income to come back, but a lot of the old guys can't provide it. You've got to own a piece. You need room to play, and with the debts these guys have, and the government payments, there isn't any play room," he said.

Stuart Tarr is a writer in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois in the office of David Onstad. This article and the following article on page 8 are two in a series of Tarr's articles on organic farming that can be found on the ASAP website.

(above, left)
Dennis and JoAnn Dickman raise organic pastured chickens on their southwest Konkakee County farm.

Not Your Average Hog Farmer

"I got into hogs because the chickens didn't eat all of the organic grain I was growing."



Paul Gebhart, who farms about 300 acres near Edinburg IL, pulled out the latest invoice on the five organically raised hogs he sells weekly to Niman Ranch, the California based natural meat packer. The invoice shows that on the commodity market he would have gotten $470 for the hogs, but he was paid $731, a $261 premium. Through Niman Ranch, Gebhart's pork ends up being served at some of the most exclusive restaurants in the country.

Gebhart has about 100 pigs of all sizes on site. He staggers farrowing with his 14 sows and produces a new litter every three to four weeks. When there is an excess supply he can't sell to the organic packers, he simply sells on the commodity markets.

But hogs were not his entree into organics. Before pigs were chickens, which still account for a large share of his business. "I got into hogs because the chickens didn't eat all of the organic grain I was growing," he said.

Like many farmers now producing organic or all natural foods, Gebhart drifted into it, but has been increasingly encouraged by the results. Leaving the University of Illinois in 1973 with a degree in Animal Sciences, Gebhart went into farming with his father Arthur, who was a conventional farmer. But then in 1976 Arthur contracted a very rare cancer, and died two years later. Paul's belief that the chemicals they had been using were implicated in his father's illness helped moved him toward total organic production.

"The next step is to turn production into people food instead of a commodity," said Gebhart. His livestock operation started with organic turkeys, and it worked well, but he found the market far too seasonal and too easy to overstock. But with the turkeys, he got into direct marketing, "by accident, really. It was just a one crop thing, but people seemed to want it. From there I thought, if turkeys, why not chickens? And I tried the Salatin thing (the Joel Salatin method of raising pastured poultry), and it just kind of took off."

Organic pastured poultry costs more than the supermarket variety, Gebhart noted, but also pointed out that not all the costs are included in the price of the latter. "Yeah organics are high, but so is chemotherapy. We don't add in the external costs of pollution and loss of soil and soil productivity and health insurance costs. Health care should be preventative." Along these lines Gebhart is planning to grow flax this year to feed the chickens in order to increase the health-enhancing omega 3 oils in the eggs. "Eat an egg with nutrients. We need to get natural nutrients into the diet. Forget the expensive pills," he said.

"One thing about this, though, is we've got to keep it local. There's room for more producers. Don't haul chickens past a chicken grower, and don't overproduce. I recently got a call from someone in Quincy wanting my chickens. I supplied them, but I don't want those customers. I would much rather have a guy in Quincy doing what I'm doing. It's stupid to haul food past a farmer."

Gebhart explained that he is fortunate to have access to 250,000 people within 25 miles of his farm, mostly in the Springfield/Decatur region. "Location is important as you need enough higher income people nearby. More remote locations might be more difficult.

Utilizing Precision Farming Technologies in a Management Intensive Grazing System

By Terry Griffin

Since its inception, precision farming technologies have primarily been utilized in traditional crop production agriculture. However, these same technologies can be very useful in other sustainable agriculture operations such as managed grazing systems. These precision farming technologies include the use of global positioning systems (GPS), geographical information systems (GIS), and handheld computers. The GPS system can be the same as those used for outdoor recreation or as elaborate as one used with agricultural equipment. Although some people may feel that GIS is difficult for individuals to use, this project is working on making the application more user friendly.

Several research locations across Illinois have been targeted for study. Two locations were selected in Central Illinois and two in Northern Illinois. Each location has unique features and requirements for grazing. Unique features may include specific water sources, areas of shade, degree of slope, and wooded areas. Specific requirements were imposed by the local manager for each paddock and may include constraints such as equal area, exact geometric shape, or equal forage production potential.

The first steps in examining a pasture were to discuss specific needs with each farm manager. Once specific needs were identified, the fieldwork began. Using a GPS receiver connected to a mobile computer with data logging software, permanent natural and manmade pasture boundaries were recorded either by georeferencing existing corners or by physically traveling the boundaries. These boundaries included fences, creeks, and other permanent structures. Areas of non-productivity such as wooded areas were recorded in a similar manner.

After all productive and nonproductive areas were recorded, they were brought back to the office and downloaded onto a desktop computer with the GIS software. Using a GIS software package such as ESRI ArcView GIS 3.2, the pasture boundaries were added as a layer of data. These data polygons were measured for area and perimeter.

Other data layers can also be added to aid in the decision making process including but not limited to: order two soil series maps, past cultural practices, grid soil fertility maps, elevation, water sources, and sources of shade.

One farm manager had nine existing pastures approximately 10 acres each. His requirement was to have six equal area paddocks within each of the nine existing pastures. This task could have been done in the pasture or within GIS as a trial and error approach, but a simpler approach was identified. Using a modified Avenue Script (the programming language proprietary to ArcView) that would make X number of equal areas out of a given polygon, the process was very close to being automated (Huber, 2002). A few paddocks were adjusted slightly due to secondary constraints of specific paddocks that had to use corresponding water sources.



Sean Evans using precision equipment to locate proposed fence carners.

Once the farm manager accepted the proposed paddock designs, the proposed paddock data layers were downloaded from the desktop computer to the handheld computer. The same GPS and handheld computer equipment used earlier to record boundaries was used to implement the design. The precision equipment was carried into the pasture to find locations where fences met. A flag placed in the ground indicated where a corner post would need to be installed. A managed grazing system design had now been successfully implemented with precision technologies.

Work is currently underway to expand the capabilities of the Avenue Scripts that subdivide the polygons into equal area polygons. Criteria identified in the managed grazing literature is being evaluated to give a ranked criteria. These criteria will be ranked to determine which factors affecting grazing are most important to least important. These ranked criteria will be added to the Avenue Scripts to further automate the design of grazing paddocks. Ideally,



Terry Griffin meosuring existing corner post boundary.

ranchers will be able to bring their pasture boundary and other information into the GIS system and be given an output to their specifications.

This study is at its earliest stages. Proposed paddocks have been implemented and are being used in the 2002 growing season. An evaluation of the paddock design will be possible once cattle data have been gathered. A poster delivered at the 6th International Conference on Precision Agriculture and Other Precision Resources in Minneapolis, Minnesota in July 2002 presented early information with an associated paper published in the proceedings. A similar poster was presented at the 2002 National Association of County Agricultural Agents in Savannah, Georgia in August 2002. It received first place in the North Central Regional contest and Honorable Mention at the national level.

Although precision farming technologies have not been used in sustainable systems as readily as in traditional crop production, uses do exist. This is one example of where precision can be used in managed grazing or other sustainable systems. Creative farmers and ranchers will find additional uses for these new technologies.

Reference: Huber, William. 2002. Personal Communication. Unpublished Avenue Script.

Terry Griffin is a University of Illinois Extension Educator in Farm Business Management and Marketing. If you would like more information, you can contact Griffin at (309) 836-3366 or griffin@uiuc.edu

Sustainable Agriculture Travel Scholarship Program

A travel scholarship program has been developed to provide educators (Extension, NRCS and other agricultural educators in the governmental, profit and non-profit sectors) with the resources to increase their awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills in order to develop and deliver programs and activities that enhance the sustainability of rural communities and the food and agricultural system. $5,000 in travel scholarships will be awarded each year on a first-come, first-served basis. Scholarships of up to $500 will be awarded. Matching funds (50/50 basis) must be provided from other sources (county funds, specialization funds, etc.). Travel scholarships may be used to support participation in conferences, tours, and other programs as well as visits to study issues or programs with researchers, Extension personnel, educational institutions, foundations, or farm families.

Proposals may be submitted at any time during the year and should be submitted at least 30 days prior to the proposed travel activity. Proposals (of one page or less) should include the following three items: (1) description and date of proposed travel activity, (2) proposed budget and (3) brief discussion of how participation in the proposed activity will help you to develop/ conduct programs to help clientele improve the sustainability of their farming operations.

Participants will be asked to write a short synopsis (12 paragraphs) of the project that will be published in a future of issue of the Agroecology News and Perspectives newsletter.

For more information contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217) 968-5512 or email: cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu

CALENDAR

Illinois Water 2002 Conference
November 6-7, 2002
Champaign, Illinois

Illinois Water 2002 is an exciting statewide conference for all citizens, groups, and students interested in water resource issues in Illinois. The conference will be held at the Chancellor Hotel and will focus on science, technology, and policy developments, while also bringing major water resource organizations and interests together to explore common ground. This conference is being targeted to land and water contractors/engineers, conservation agency staff, watershed committees, and city well water managers.

Please visit www.environ.uiuc.edu/iwrc/Water2002 for a detailed agenda and to register on-line. For more information, contact Lisa Merrifield at (217) 333-0536.

"A Time to Act: Providing Educators with Resources to Address Small Farm Issues"
November 13 – Keller Inn and Convention Center - Effingham
November 14 – Holiday Inn City Centre - Peoria

Choose to attend one of these almost identical workshops in November. The workshops will include a keynote presentation by John Ikerd, professor emeritus, University of Missouri entitled "Small Farms: The Foundation for Long Run Food Security." The workshop sessions will feature speakers on farmer cooperatives and marketing strategies, regulatory and government barriers, grants and resources and market access.

More detailed information regarding the agenda and registration is available on the Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program website at http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap.

For more information, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217) 968-5512, cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu.

The 17th Symposium of the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA)
November 17-20, 2002
Orlando, Florida

This year's symposium will focus on small farm diversification and competitiveness; engaging diverse stakeholders in support of small farms; farming systems knowledge and information; farming systems education and training; food security and safety.

For more information visit http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ifsa or contact: Ms. Beth Miller-Tipton
University of Florida/IFAS
Phone: (352) 392-5930
Fax: (352) 392-9734
Email: bmiller-tipton@mail.ifas.ufl.edu

Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy Farmers

Do you want to manage your dairy herd in a way that can:

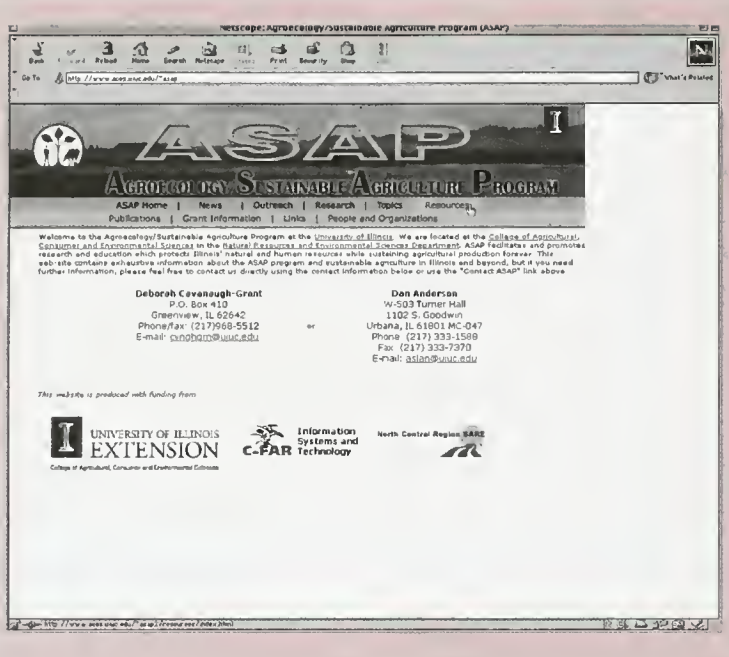
- cut costs and increase profits?
- provide you with a better quality of life while enhancing the environment?

The Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy Farmers is a one-year certificate program in grass-based dairying. The course provides opportunities for internships, mentoring, farm tours, and networking with experienced grass-based dairy farmers. You can also learn about grazing sheep, goats, and other species. Specialized scholarship support and a distance education option are available for this course.

The Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy Farmers is part of the UW-Madison Farm and Industry Short Course, with support from the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (http://www.wisc.edu/cias).

For an application or brochure, contact:
Trish Haza at phaza@facstaff.wisc.edu

For more information about this program, contact:
Dick Cates at rlcates@facstaff.wisc.edu



A New Look!

The Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP) website is undergoing a redesign. The new format will allow easier navigation through the site and include lots of new information about organic farming, sustainable ag and related topics. Check out the new design at the same web address: http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap. Please let us know what you think of the changes by sending your comments to Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu

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Healthier Schools, Happier Farmers: Getting Crops to the Cafeteria

WINTER 2002

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Written by Jeffrey Bouley, communications specialist for Generation Green, in consultation with Rhonda Williams

The power of language is reflected in a small but mighty section of the 2002 Farm Bill. Section 4303 sets the stage for creating healthier meals at schools while also developing markets for small farms and farmer cooperatives nationwide. The trick now is to convince schools that buying locally grown produce is a good idea and to build an infrastructure to make such purchases possible.

The challenge is being met by a collaboration of organizations (see page 5) through their Farm-to-School Initiative. The idea of providing fresher fare in schools while supporting more sustainable agricultural methods isn't new in Illinois or other states, but the passage of the Farm Bill in May 2002 is helping to invigorate efforts and give proponents of such programs more leverage. Nestled among the larger issues tackled by the Farm Bill, including subsidies, conservation and food labeling, is a simple statement with broad implications: that institutions participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast program should purchase local foods where practicable.

The words "where practicable" provide a potential loophole for school meal administrators because access to local, and in particular to organic, produce is limited, particularly in states like Illinois where the growing season is relatively short. But the need is great in schools and other institutions for fresher and healthier foods, making the concept viable and relevant. Especially amid growing concern about the rising rates of

continued on next page

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College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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Many high school vending machines offer a selection of high-fat, high-calorie snacks, despite growing concern about rising rates of childhood obesity and diabetes.

childhood obesity and diabetes, the time is ripe for the Farm-to-School Initiative.

"Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that more than 70 percent of middle and junior high schools, and almost all senior high schools, have vending machines or snack bars where junk foods and soft drinks are sold," noted Rochelle Davis, executive director of Generation Green and its Healthy Schools Campaign.

"More than 20 percent of schools serve brand-name fast foods, often as part of the school lunch program funded by the USDA. It's atrocious that we would peddle high-calorie, low-nutrition foods to our kids while overlooking an array of fresh produce and products produced right here in Illinois and the Midwest region. What farm-to-school proponents are working toward is creating a win-win situation for schools and farmers in our state."



"School food services people usually are really squeezed, and food is usually a low budget priority."

Davis and her allies in this cause, including Erika Allen, project manager for Midwest-based Growing Power in Chicago, admit that connecting all schools with sustainably grown produce isn't feasible right now. Rather, they are looking to start the process of educating and connecting farmers and small farm co-ops with interested school districts.

"Our key niche at Growing Power is training small farmers to bring them up to speed with sustainable agriculture technology, marketing and distribution so that they can grow and strengthen their operations and grow the food that we really want to eat," Allen said. "We accomplish the educational aspect through Growing Power, and the marketing and distribution through our Rainbow Farmers Cooperative, which buys directly from local farmers in Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan as well as some southeastern states."

"Production is one of the biggest issues," Allen continued. "If all the school systems in Illinois started doing farm-to-school programs all at the same time, right now, there simply wouldn't be enough fresh, safe and healthy produce or enough farmers to handle the demand." This is why Generation Green and other organizations are looking to build a network of interested producers who can grow a variety of crops in a sustainable manner that are also appealing foods to serve in schools.

Davis is also looking for technical and financial assistance within a national network. One great resource is Marion Kalb, farm-to-school program director for the Venice, California-based Community Food Security Coalition. Davis invited Kalb to Chicago to help with strategy meetings for the Illinois Farm-to-School Initiative.



More than 20 percent of schools serve brand-name fast foods, often as part of the school lunch program funded by the USDA.

"It's usually not that hard to get everyone together in the same room -- policymakers, farmers, advocacy groups -- but it's difficult to find the resources to deal with the issues that come up later on," Kalb said. "School food services people usually are really squeezed, and food is usually a low budget priority compared to textbooks and academic programs, for example."

One of the things Kalb does is to help the stakeholders, from farmers to school boards, figure out what they can and cannot do, and help them identify possible sources of funding for marketing and purchasing.

"One of the issues that often comes up is price," she noted. "Schools tend to look for the cheapest prices, especially through commodity purchasing programs. And what we've found is that prices can be high when you're just starting off with one or two schools and working through a single broker or co-op. But as you broaden the involvement and get more schools on board, the prices go down as the volume goes up."



"If kids are involved with growing food, knowing where it comes from, knowing why fresh food is important, and being educated about a more holistic approach to food systems, they won't just be going to fast food places; they won't be so quick to choose less healthy foods."

Although many funding and distribution issues have yet to be resolved, the Farm-to-School Initiative in Illinois made major headway this summer when the group convened a meeting of school food service directors, farmer organizations and some of the key government

continued on next page

agencies. They met to discuss Illinois' participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Department of Defense Commodity Program. Shortly after the meeting, the State Board of Education decided to participate in the program.

"If all the school systems in Illinois started doing farm-to-school programs all at the same time, right now, there simply wouldn't be enough fresh, safe and healthy produce or enough farmers to handle the demand."

"This program earmarks $2 million annually from the school lunch budget for the purchase of fresh produce through the Department of Defense Purchasing Program," explained Lowell Lenschow, manager of the Illinois Specialty Growers Association. "A portion of all of these dollars could be spent purchasing locally grown produce from the farm-to-school program."



Far many schaals, access to local, and in particular ta organic, produce is limited, particularly in states like Illinois where the growing seasan is relatively short.

"While the decision to participate in the Defense Department program does not specifically require purchasing from local farms with sustainably grown products, it's a huge step in the right direction, particularly with the new language in the Farm Bill encouraging schools to buy their food locally," Davis emphasized. "It's the right step toward sustainability because it provides local economic development and lowers emissions and costs associated with transportation."

One of the keys to getting more schools on board, though, is convincing them that the initial extra effort is worth it. Fortunately there are a growing number of projects providing exciting evidence that it is. For example, there is a thriving Farmers' Market Salad Bar program in southern California coordinated by Rodney Taylor, director of food and nutrition services for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The three-year program purchases fresh produce from local farmers and has revitalized the district's formerly lackluster salad bar system.

"The key from the start was making the produce user-friendly for the kids," Taylor said. "The apples were quartered. The strawberries were sliced. And the grapes were already plucked. No one was prodding the kids to eat. They made their own choices and they actually ate more produce because it was so well presented."

Farm-to-School Collaborators
The organizations collaborating in the Farm-to-School Initiative are:

Generation Green and its Healthy Schools Campaign

Growing Power, Inc.

Illinois Stewardship Alliance

Institute for Community Resource Development

Safer Pest Control Project

Illinois Specialty Growers Association

University of Illinois Agroecology Sustainable Agriculture Program

The pilot program that began in 1997 was rolled out to all 15 schools in the district in 2000. In the first year of the district-wide program, sales jumped from 30 to more than 100 salad bar meals a day.

"The kids love it," said Taylor, who also includes nutrition education classes, farm and farmers' market tours, organic gardening projects, and physical education as part of the program. "And it supports our goal of helping students to become lifelong healthy eaters."

That's exactly what Davis, Allen and Lenschow want to see in Illinois. Davis recently hired Rhonda Williams as director of the Farm-to-School Initiative to plan for launching the program in September 2003. "We are confident, however, that we can get selected school districts to participate this school year," Williams said. "It's all about building an infrastructure for providing healthy food choices to children."

"If kids are involved with growing food, knowing where it comes from, knowing why fresh food is important, and being educated about a more holistic approach to food systems," Allen noted, "they won't just be going to fast food places; they won't be so quick to choose less healthy foods."



Section 4303 of the 2002 Farm Bill sets the stage for creating healthier meals at schools while also developing markets for small farms and farmer cooperotives notionwide.

"The government wants to see children develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime," Lenschow said. "The Farm-to-School Initiative can contribute in a very positive way to help make this become a reality."

For more information on the Illinois Farm-to-School Initiative, contact Rhonda Williams in Generation Green's Chicago office at (312) 419-1810.

Photos in this article by Debra Levey Larson.

Students Connecting with Sustainable Agriculture



Student ambassadors at the McCulley Heritage Project placed descriptive markers far lacal flora along trails.

By Candy Anderson

The Education Corps of Student Ambassadors for the Environment (ECOSAFE) Project has finished its first year, involving 23 Illinois junior and senior high students in an innovative initiative connecting them with farmers engaging in sustainable farming practices. Most of the students, from five school districts in Morgan, Scott, Pike, Adams and Brown counties, were referred by an ag teacher. Two participants were urban students from Jacksonville whose experience with agriculture extended no farther than purchasing vegetables and fruits from the local grocery mart. Many of the others live on farms but have not been active in the operations on their family farms.

Modeled after a similar environmental conservation project in Colorado, ECOSAFE is a three-year project designed to provide experiential educational opportunities in sustainable agriculture for students interested in "learning while earning." Students were paid a stipend for their work while learning about organic farming and gardening, natural resource conservation and agri-tourism.

Sites chosen for ECOSAFE were the Ocean Farm in Golden, McCulley Heritage Project in Calhoun County, and the Apple Basket Farm in Barry. Each site provided a different experience for the students. Each team of students spent three weeks at each site, gaining knowledge and experience in different aspects of sustainable agriculture.

The activities at Ocean Farm, an organic farm owned and managed by Louis Reuschel, provided the students with an education in the various activities related to organic farming. Reuschel has provided a parcel of land for organic gardening to Edwin Waters. The McCulley Heritage Project is a 940-acre farm open to the public for hiking, picnics, bird watching and other outdoor recreational activities in the natural beauty of Calhoun County. The Apple Basket Farm, a 140-acre commercial fruit farm in Barry, Illinois owned by Jack and Karen Cruttendon, provided a model for agri-tourism with its corn maze, petting zoo, restaurant and store featuring orchard produce, crafts and other natural products.

Students had the opportunity to take part in many unique experiences at the three sites. They built a wooden bridge, cleaned and maintained trails, and placed descriptive markers for local flora along trails at the McCulley Heritage Project. At the Ocean Farm, students assisted in the farm operations: sorting vegetables for market, weeding the garden, walking organic soybeans, mowing, building wire cages for new trees and applying organic compost. At the Apple Basket, they "clubbed" peaches, thin-



Students take a break from work at the Apple Basket Farm.

ning the fruit to produce higher quality product to sell to the public. Students also attended two field days to learn about various farming and tillage methods.

One difficulty of the project was transportation. Initially, about an hour and a half was spent each day transporting students from a central location to the three work sites, but that time decreased as shortcuts were discovered and the routes became more familiar. Originally, the project was designed for a three-day schedule, but transportation costs were prohibitive and the project was amended to just two days, scheduled consecutively to allow for two-day rentals of vans. Students participated from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., including travel time.



One student ambassador thins peaches at the Apple Basket Farm.

The final component of the project will be individual presentations. Each student will speak about his or her experience or offer information on sustainable agriculture to other students, agriculture organizations and other audiences. By sharing the knowledge they gained during their summer adventures in sustainable agriculture, the students will hopefully succeed in spreading the message of stewardship, entrepreneurship, and sustaining the environment to other young people and others interested or engaged in agriculture.

Plans for the second year of the ECOSAFE Project include expanding the geographic area to include students from central Illinois school districts, involving students in a cultural heritage project in Carlinville, engaging additional urban students in the project and designing a syllabus and resource library for replication by schools and other organizations interested in operating a similar project. In the third year of the project, students and participating farmers will have the opportunity to attend a conference in the fall of 2004. The Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society hopes to provide opportunities for students throughout Illinois to "earn while they learn" about sustainable agriculture practices.

Candy Anderson is the director of the ECOSAFE Project. The project is funded by the Illinois Department of Agriculture's C-2000 Sustainable Agriculture Program and is administered by the Two Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council and the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society, a member-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and promote sustainable agriculture practices through information, education and advocacy.

For more information contact Anderson at (217) 285-4114, or e-mail isns@2riverrc&d.org.



ECOSAFE Project participants place a descriptive marker to identify the species of a tree at the McCulley Heritage Project.

New Web Tool Maps and Analyzes Illinois

by Leanne Lucas

Everyone from farmers and natural resource experts to city planners and real estate agents has an innovative new Internet tool at their fingertips, thanks to the combined efforts of the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and other agencies.

The Resource Management Mapping Service (RMMS) allows people to create maps of any area in Illinois in a matter of minutes.

"The uses for the RMMS website are as varied as the users," said Rick Farnsworth, natural resources economist with University of Illinois Extension. "State staff use RMMS to track changes in natural resources and adapt management plans accordingly. And farmers visit the site to get a bird's-eye view of production or to calculate acreage needed for state and federal conservation programs."

"A long-distance runner once used the website to measure and map a marathon route," Farnsworth added. Real estate agents have used it to show prospective clients the area in which they hope to buy property.

"City planners also benefit," he said. "If a town wants to expand, they need information about the impact growth will have. For instance, where will this growth occur in relation to the town's existing boundaries? Will it encroach on the state's mandated buffer around public wells or protected habitat? Planners can start making decisions using the maps they create on this website.

"One of the key strengths of RMMS is that we have most of the data that is publicly available from state and federal agencies," Farnsworth noted. "Users can come to one site, locate the area of interest to them and create the maps they need."

Users can search by county, watershed, town or zip code, or they can draw rectangles on the map to zoom to an area they want to view, he said. Once there, they can then choose a base layer on which to lay all other data layers. There are more than a dozen base layers, including cropland maps from 1998, 1999 and 2000, and aerial photographs taken in 1998 and 1999 that show the land in question.

After a base layer is chosen, any number of other layers can be added, including:

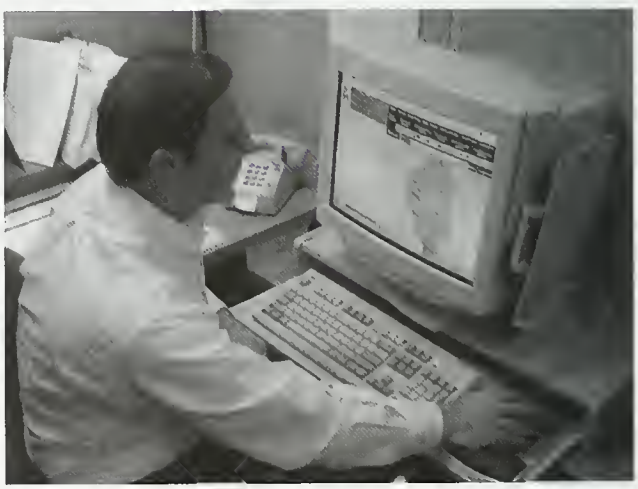
- resource layers, which identify county land, lakes, rivers, watersheds, wetlands and other natural resource features
- administrative layers, which include various IDNR districts as well as townships and congressional and legislative districts
- economic layers, such as state highways, county roads, wells and more

According to Farnsworth, the next step for the RMMS site is to create decision tools based on the information available.

The Wetland Impact Review Tool, or WIRT, is the first of several tools that will come online in 2003. "When someone wants to change land use," said Farnsworth, "WIRT will alert the user to likely resource problems. Click on the WIRT tool, zoom in to the land in question and draw a line around it. Everything else is automatic. WIRT will give you a heads-up on the presence of nearby wetlands, nature preserves, streams and flood zones, to name a few."

The RMMS website is funded by IDNR and the Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR). Farnsworth believes it is a noteworthy success story of cooperation that started with C-FAR members setting a high priority on better management of the state's natural resources.

Leanne Lucas is a writer in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois.



Rick Fornsworth demonstrates some of the features of the new Resource Management Mapping Service.

The RMMS website is located at http://space1.itcs.uiuc.edu/website/rmms.

USDA Launches New National Organic Standards

On October 21st, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman launched the implementation of USDA's national organic standards for agricultural products providing consistent labeling on products coast to coast.

"When consumers see the USDA national organic seal on products they will know that the products labeled organic will be consistent across the country," said Veneman. "Organic agriculture is increasing, and organic farmers across the country have been looking forward to the release of these regulations with anticipation they will create consumer confidence in their products."

The new standards were developed from extensive industry input and hundreds of thousands of public comments. Now, any organic agricultural product must meet USDA standards in order to be sold as "organic." Along with the national organic standards, USDA developed strict labeling rules to help consumers know the exact organic content of the food they buy. Consumers can tell organically produced food from conventionally produced food by reading package labels and watching for signs in the supermarket.

The USDA Organic Seal tells consumers that a product is at least 95 percent organic. Products with 70 to 95 percent organic ingredients can say so on the label (made with organic fruit, for example), but they can't display the seal.

Other USDA efforts in the organic arena include an Economic Research Service report released last month. *Recent Growth Patterns in the U.S. Organic Foods Market* indicates that U.S. organic farmland has increased from approximately 1.4 to 2.4 million acres. The report can be accessed at www.ers.usda.gov.

USDA is administering a $5-million national cost-share program to help defray the costs of certification incurred by organic producers and handlers in all 50 states, the U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.



These sample cereal boxes illustrate the four labeling categories. From left: cereal with 100 percent organic ingredients; cereal with 95 to 100 percent organic ingredients; cereal made with 70 to 95 percent organic ingredients; and cereal with up to 70 percent organic ingredients. The makers of the cereal with up to 70 percent organic ingredients may list specific organically produced ingredients on the information panel of the box but may not make any organic claims on the front of the box.

USDA will also set aside $3 million a year for fiscal years 2004 to 2007 to administer competitive research grants, largely through the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

The organic industry is growing between 20 and 25 percent annually, as it has for the last several years. U.S. retail sales of organic foods reached approximately $7.8 billion in 2000, with global sales topping $17.5 billion.

Excerpted from a press release by Alisa Harrison and George Chartier, USDA public affairs specialists.

New & Updated Publications from ATTRA

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), the sustainable agriculture information service of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), has announced new and updated additions to its publications list.

- *Scheduling Vegetable Plantings for Continuous Harvest*
- *Cucumber Beetles: Organic and Biorational IPM*
- *Protecting Water Quality on Organic Farms*
- *Solar-powered Livestock Watering Systems*
- *Anaerobic Digestion of Animal Wastes*
- *Organic Certification and the National Organic Program*
- *Sustainable Agriculture: An Introduction*
- *Alternative Soil Testing Labs*

These and more than 200 other ATTRA publications are available free to farmers, ranchers, Extension agents, market gardeners, and others engaged in commercial agriculture by calling (800) 346-9140. The publications may also be downloaded from the ATTRA website: www.attra.ncat.org.

Success Stories from SARE



Meeting the Diverse Needs of Limited-Resource Producers is a new 16-page bulletin for agricultural educators, heads of community development and agricultural organizations, government agency staff and others who want to better connect with and improve the lives of farmers and ranchers who remain hard to reach. Published by USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, the bulletin features nine success stories from around the country as a jumping-off point for adapting innovative programs to varied areas. It also provides how-to ideas for educators, socio-economic characteristics and barriers to working with varied audiences, proven teaching methods and successful connection strategies.

The bulletin is available on the SARE website www.sare.org/bulletin/limited-resource or by calling (301) 504-5236.

VOICES FROM ILLINOIS FARM WOMEN

"...Our imagination is shaped by our cultural ideas of what a farmer is. When I read my children's story books that have to do with farmers, and there are lots of them, the farmer is always a man and his wife, even though she may be working with him, she may be gathering the eggs or milking the cow; she is the farmer's wife."

Lisa French, Peabody, Kansas.
From Kansas Farm Women: Growing Out of the Tilth,
by Cynthia Vagnetti

Cynthia Vagnetti is seeking Illinois farm women interested in participating in a documentary project based on oral history interviews, combining still photography with digital video technology that will focus on women in agriculture. Entitled *Voices from Illinois Farm Women*, the project is particularly interested in identifying and capturing the stories of women who are engaged in sustainable agriculture.

"We are seeking women who have strong opinions on husbandcare, childcare, eldercare, animalcare, housecare and landcare to be a part of this documentary," said project director Cynthia Vagnetti. "We want to feature women with gusto and determination in work that previously was considered a man's job and which magnifies their decision-making power and the impact of their decisions on the many interconnected components of a farm operation and community life."

This project is being produced in collaboration with Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, University of Illinois, Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program. For more information call (217) 968-5512 or e-mail cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu.

CALENDAR

National No-till Conference
January 8 - 11
Indianapolis, Indiana

The 11th Annual National No-till Conference is scheduled for January 8 to 11 at the Westin Indianapolis Hotel. The theme for this year's conference is "No-tilling for a More Prosperous Tomorrow."

The conference will feature presentations by leading researchers, agri-business firms and farmers who will share hundreds of field-tested ideas to increase yields and profits by farming with no-till farming methods. The conference will also offer dozens of exhibits from seed, chemical, fertilizer, machinery and equipment, computer hardware and software, and other agri-business companies.

To receive a conference agenda and for registration details, check out the conference website at http://www.lesspub.com/ntf/NNTC/nntc.html or call their toll-free number (800) 645-8455, or e-mail your request to: info@lesspub.com.

Farm Conservation Programs Teleconference
January 15

A Farm Conservation Programs Teleconference is being held from 9:00 a.m. to noon on January 15 to educate agency staff and landowners about the major conservation provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill. Participants will receive updated information on the basic provisions, economic incentives, cost-share rates, technical support, and signup periods for the programs. Experts will be online to answer questions.

Heart of America Grazing Conference
January 22 - 23
Hannibal, Missouri

A multi-state Heart of America Grazing Conference will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, January 22 and 23 at the Hannibal Inn. Speakers will be specialists from throughout the U.S., with several exhibits available from industry representatives. For more information, contact Ed Ballard at (217) 347-5126 or ballard@extension.uiuc.edu.

23rd Annual Ecological Farming Conference
January 22 - 25

This four-day winter forum is the world's foremost conference on sustainable agriculture. "Eco-Farm" features prominent keynote speakers and more than 50 workshops on the latest advances in agricultural production, marketing, research, and important issues. Exchange vital information with people from around the world while renewing your spirit at historic Asilomar on California's magnificent Monterey coast. For more information, view the website at www.eco-farm.org/efc/efc_main.html.

North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association
February 3 - 10
Charlotte, North Carolina

The annual NAFDMA conference is open to anyone interested in farm direct marketing. We visit a different region of the United States or Canada each year to showcase the industry's diversity. The week-long conference features bus tours, full-day workshops, a trade show, a two-day program filled with several concurrent sessions, and several fun activities to promote networking among farmers, Extension agents, consultants, Departments of Agriculture staff and other agricultural professionals. For more information call (888) 884-9270 or see the conference website at http://www.nafdma.com/conference/carolinas/index.htm.

Crop Ecology Workshops
February 21 and March 4
Video conferences at five locations throughout Illinois

The February 21 workshop will focus on residue quality while the March 4 workshop will focus on soil biology. Both workshops will begin with a brief overview of crop ecology as well as a comprehensive overview of Illinois research on the subjects and materials that educators/consultants can use with their farmer/landowner clients.

The format will be Compressed-Video Dial-up/Internet Video Conferencing. Locations include: Champaign, Moline, Springfield, and Oak Brook. The fifth site is pending. Participants will receive a package of support and reference materials including a CD-ROM with educational materials.

For more information, contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu or (217) 968-5512 and Ellen Phillips at ephillps@.uiuc.edu or (708) 352-0109.

Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society/Southeastern Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Association (ISAS/SISAA) Alternative Ag Workshop
February 22
Effingham, Illinois

This workshop is designed to provide small farmers with ideas for developing and marketing an altemative ag enterprise. Keynote addresses will provide insights into business development, building strong customer relationships and the importance of diversification. Breakout sessions will address issues in agritourism, specialty crop production, altemative approaches to raising livestock, aquaculture, business planning and business finance. Government and commercial exhibitors will also showcase their products and services in the exhibit area.

Registration includes refreshments, lunch, and a CD-ROM toolkit. For more information call (217) 347-7773 or e-mail effingham_co@extension.uiuc.edu.

Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference
February 27 - March 1
La Crosse, Wisconsin

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services (MOSES) will host the 14th annual Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference (UMOFC) at the La Crosse Center. This farmer-centered conference brings together a diverse group of over 1,400 participants. Learn about organic agriculture and meet people who share an interest in organic and sustainable farming. For more information, see the conference website at http://www.mosesorganic.org/.

Workshops on Grant Writing

Illinois producers and agriculture professionals can learn how to write grant proposals for two sustainable agriculture programs — North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR SARE) Producer Grant Program and the Illinois Department of Agriculture's C 2000 Sustainable Agriculture Program — at three workshops in January and February.

- January 28, Mount Vernon
- January 29, Lincoln
- February 6, Sycamore

All workshops will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon with individual grant writing assistance until 3:00 p.m.

The workshops will include information to help farmers compete for grants from the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR SARE) Producer Grant Program. Producers interested in research, demonstrations or educating others about profitable, environmentally sound, socially responsible agricultural are encouraged to apply.

"The Producer Grant Program emphasizes the importance of farmer-driven research and indigenous knowledge," said Ken Schneider, former farmer/rancher and NCR SARE's liaison for the producer grant program. "We support innovative farmers and ranchers looking for ways to overcome obstacles to a sustainable option."

In 2003, producer grants will be awarded in amounts up to $6,000. Group projects with three or more producers can be funded up to $18,000. Funds will be made available to successful applicants in fall 2003.

This year's workshops will also include information about the Illinois Department of Agriculture's C 2000 Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program. The program provides funds for agencies, organizations and individuals for (1) on-farm research and demonstration; (2) outreach and education; and (3) university research.

The workshops, conducted by the University of Illinois Agroecology/Sustainable Agriculture Program and the Illinois Department of Agriculture, will explain both programs and the requirements to receive funding. The workshops are co-sponsored by University of Illinois Extension, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society.

For more information, check the NCR SARE website (http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/), or contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217) 968-5512, cvnghgrn@uiuc.edu. Registration is required and available online at http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/asap/topics/grantwriting.html.

AGRO-ECOLOGY
News and Perspectives

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